THE RELIGIOUS

HISTORIAN.

T. FANNING, EDITOR.

VOL. 3. NASHVILLE, FEBRUARY, 1874. NO. 2.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST,

NEW SERIES. NO. 2.

With the view of preserving connection, in discussing the "Doctrine of Faith" we respectfully remind our readers that, we closed our first number in the "New Series" with a brief reference to the revelations in the Bible, regarding God, our divine Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, our blessed Savior, and the good spirit, our advocate, teacher and witness; and we consider it important, in the further prosecution of our labor, to consider the immense value of,

THE "WHOLESOME WORDS" OF THE SPIRIT,

"Even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine, which is according to godliness" [1 Tim. VI. 3] as the sure basis of the existence of a church worthy of our highest regards. Some

six hundred years after the flood, and about 2247 after our creation the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech, journeying from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there, and they said, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower whose top shall reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." This was the first attempt of mankind to inaugurate "self government." The people very honestly, and innocently, desired to construct a bond of perpetual union; and imagined that a great central city and a high tower, would enable them to preserve the "*one speech*" and one language, which they then spoke. This also, may be regarded, the first great apostacy—after the dereliction of Cain—of man from his maker. The experiment signally evinced want of faith in the Creator, and yet, it manifested unlimited confidence in the people, to manage independently, their own governmental affairs. The Father in heaven, still retaining the tenderest regard for his wayward children of earth, deemed it wise and benevolent to frustrate their speculative designs in their very incipiency.

To accomplish his wise purposes, he said, "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city. Therefore, is the name of it called, Babel." *Confusion.* [Gen. 11 3.—9.] Gross darkness from that fatal day, obstructed the pathway of life, and from the profound ignorance, which supervened in reference to each other's speech, the people were seperated into different families, tongues and tribes, and were very soon estranged from each other, and became bitter and denouncing enemies. From the confusion of speech, wars for self protection were the universal resort of the families of the earth, and it may be safely affirmed that to the present day bloody conflicts, have determined the rights of the people. It requires no effort to discern that, the great national sins of the race, in the different families of the earth, have arisen mainly from not clearly comprehending each other's language. What one people call good, others pronounce evil; and hence, have arisen the confusion, strifes and bloody struggles with which the world is still sorely afflicted. The second remarkable example of confusion, and thwarted expectations, from confusion of language, in the world's history, may be seen in the condition of the Jews, on their return from captivity, at Babylon, some 434 years anterior to the Christian era.

The Prophet, Nehemiah, said to his brethren, "Saw, I Jews, who married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon and of Moab, and their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jew's language, and I contended with them and cursed them, and plucked off their hair and smote them." [Ne. 13: 29.—25.]

When the law was read that people of other tongues, should not be admitted into the congregation of the Lord, "They seperated from Israel, all the mixed multitude," [Ne. 13: 3.] When Ezra, on reaching Jerusalem after the captivity, witnessed the great sin and sad confusion of his people from the Ashdodical language employed, he "Fell upon his knees and spread out his hands to the Lord God" and said, "I am ashamed and blush, to lift up my face to thee, my God, for our iniquities are increased over our heads, and our trespass has gone up unto the heavens. We cannot stand before thee, because of this"—the sin of Ashdodical alliances.—[Ezra. 9. 6: 15.] After much weeping and confession, the broken hearted were called together, when Ezra made the all Israel "swear, that they would do according to the law." When the multitude heard that they must seperate from the people of strange speech, they promptly replied, "so, must we do." "And they gave their hands that they would, put away their wives" and families of impure language. [Ezra. 10. 19.]

In Nehemiah's argument to his kindred to be separated from the nations, of strange tongues, he happily referred to, "Solomon, who although, he was beloved of his God," went into ruinous idolatry, through the voice of strangers, who "turned away his heart after other gods," and the kingdom of his father David, in consequence of his sin in adopting the impure language of his "Outlandish," associates, was rent from his hands. With these simple *memoranda* before us, we may with great propriety, invite attention to the marvelous sin of the people of God in departing from the "Wholesome words" of the spirit under the reign of the Messiah. The thousands of disciple made on Penticost, and soon thereafter, who believed through the "sound words" of the Apostles, were of "one heart and of one soul: neither said they that ought of the things which they professed were their own." When the middle wall of partition was taken down from between Jews and Gentiles, all were made "one" in Christ Jesus. There was "but one body," one people, one cause, one doctrine, and "All bowed the knee to the same God and father of our Lord Jesus

Christ, of whom, the whole family in heaven and earth' was named. [Eph3. 15.] All joyfully heard the same words of the spirit, and consequently in believing the same things, were of one faith. No discord interposed, but in believing through the identical words of truth, perfect unity pervailed. "The same form of sound words" was held and loved by each member of the great spiritual family; and there really existed amongst the members, no adequate cause of discord or, a spiritual Babel rebellion.

The "Mother of abominations, on the scarlet beast of Rome with her harlot daughters of the earth," we are free to say, was not then in existence. With these examples of ruinous apostacy, from adopting, strange words, and ways not divine, we are somewhat prepared to appreciate the momentous importance of the *simple forms of speech* which made christians, in the first age of the church, one people, who lovingly worked together, as the happy children of the same father in heaven.

Hitherto, much of our space has been employed, in plain historical schetches from the word of God; and now with the hope of giving our investigations, a more practical direction, we deem it prudent, to invite attention to a few most obvious and legitimate conclusions drawn from

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY AS AT PRESENT USUALLY ORGANIZED.

We feel little or no aspiration, to attempt a detailed exposure of the real or imaginary departures of the Romish hierarchy, from the simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; or to question the right of the mother of abominations, or the "Little horn" which Daniel saw rising from the "ten horns," to "speak great words against the Most High, to wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws." Much of her prophetic history has been fulfilled. The Judgment has set, the dominion is broken, if not annihiliated, and her destruction will continue to the end. He who can not see that, God has already judged, and sentenced him who was to "Sit in the temple of God, showing that he was God," is not prepared to read understandingly, at least, the signs of the times. Neither are we inclined to assail the

Protestant daughters of the sickly and dying mistress of the nations. The day of their departure, will follow close upon the heel of their expiring mother. Their apostacy from the "Wholesome words" of the spirit, is too plainly written in the world's history, to doubt their speedy and inevitable doom. Our ambition is to ascertain, with historical certainty, where, "The people of the saints" are to be found qualified to take possession of "The kingdom and dominion," and to properly appreciate, "The greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven." The Prophet said, "The saints shall possess the kingdom, till all dominions shall serve the Prince. It is a matter of historical record that, there are people spread abroad, who profess to be "Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, or christians" whose garments are possibly, not deeply and hopelessly stained by the corruptions of the Romish mother or her weird daughters. Some half a century ago, the records show, that an humble people could be seen in the states of America and in other quarters of the earth, who pleaded for "The ancient landmarks and the ancient order in religion, as set forth and enjoined by Jesus of Nazareth and his inspired Apostles. They, and they alone, are the people, whose habitation we are ardently seeking. They professed to believe no creed but that which was written by the finger of God; and evinced no disposition to walk in their own wisdom, or the wisdom of others of their earth-born race, and claimed the right to no words of authority, save those given by the Holy Spirit. A single church, walking in the light of God, with members all fully equipped in the armor of the spirit, would certainly, possess power for great good on the earth, even at this eventful juncture.

We do not affirm that, there is no such church. Far be it from our heart, to doubt that, God has a people whose mission it is to hold up the light of life, to the erring of earth, through evil as well as good report.

In the days of the Savior, it was said, "The kingdom came not by observation" and we apprehend, that not a few of our contemporaries, may have eyes, but see not. The vision of many, may be seriously impaired, by myths of Satan; and all of us might well inquire if we have discovered the true mode of examining the scriptures, to enable us to discriminate between the *true* and *false* in religion? Possibly, our indolence may dispose us to satisfy our hearts with the speculation that, whatever, is, is right, in matters spiritual, and to content ourselves with the *opinion*, that,

the church and religion, are whatever men think them to be. Spiritual blindness, in points regarded small, is often quite as fatal, as in subjects of the greatest magnitude. Eve merely doubted the truth of a few very simple words, and yet, her error, with its consequences, is read and known of all men. But times change, and men change with them. For the past two hundred years, Protestantism, we presume, has made but little, if any advances in the truth. We are not sure but, the current denominations, of what the people call "Protestant Christians," are more the imitators of Rome than, they were in the days of Luther and Calvin. Recent indications indeed, from the "Old Catholics" of Europe, must satisfy thinking people that, they have in a very short space, made greater advances in spiritual light, than Protestants have in centuries. We are quite sure that the churches directed by human wisdom, for the past fifty years, have made retrograde movements, both in faith and practice.

But earnestly desiring to look into the true spiritual condition of the people with whom we have religiously associated from our youth, and with whom we hope to walk in harmony down to the grave, we gravely ask,

IF THE PEOPLE SCATTERED ABROAD, CLAIMING TO BE, SIMPLY DISCIPLES OF CHRIST, OR CHRISTIANS, ARE FULLY AND SQUARELY ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH?

But a bird's eye view of our history, need we, at present, attempt. As intimated on previous occasions, the Disciples, some half a century ago, professed to take the Bible, the whole Bible, in the words of the spirit, fairly translated, and nothing but the Bible, as their only creed and rule of life. Had the great movers, in what some call, "*This reformation*" been satisfied with denominationalism, they would not have left the sects. Neither, would they have opposed human creeds, forms and ordinances, which have come into existence, since the days of the Apostles. With the solemn conviction that, the old forms and ordinances, are better than the new, not a few very good and great men, have made, the manly and christian effort to escape from Babylonish confu-

sion, and return to the ancient order, furnished by inspiration in the New testament.

The great question amongst us is to determine

TO WHAT EXTENT WE HAVE MADE SPIRITUAL PROGRESS?

1st. We are fully satisfied that, the leaders in what some call "This reformation" have succesfully opposed human expedients for the service of God; and that, christian faith is through the "Wholesome words" of our Lord Jesus Christ, and his inspired Apostles. They have also, satisfied myriads of the soundest thinkers of the age that, there is no acceptable service of God, but through the "Forms of sound doctrine" contained in the Holy scriptures. This seems to us, a great achievement.

2. Through this living faith, hundred of thousands of the honest and intelligent of age, have by obedience been brought into church relations; and are now steadily laboring to restore the ancient order of service amongst the saints. In this direction our attainments, are not yet fully satisfactory to ourselves.

3. Through the labor of the disciples of Christ, within the past half century, however hundreds of thousands, more, reared in the denominations, have been led to doubt the authority of worldly expedients for spiritual results; and very many even, in the parties, are not only studying but are really, preaching, in a manner, which bears no doubt, that they are not only endeavoring to escape from Babylonian captivity, but are in truth and good faith, turning their faces Zionward. This, we claim, to say the least, a good work.

4. The disciples, have wonderfully, succeeded in convincing their contemporaries, that no religious performance is acceptable to God, except it is by the authority of Christ.

5. We have also successfully maintained that, sects and parties, in religion, whether Romish, Grecian, Protestant, or otherwise, have not the slightest authority for their organization in the Holy scriptures. It is true, none of us doubt that, there are God fearing people in partisan churches, and hence, the exhortation, to come out of her (Babylon) my people, and be separate. The

very earnest effort has been, to encourage the organic union of all the truly pious, upon the "One foundation laid in Zion," in order that, the world might believe that, the Father sent the son to save us from our sins; and afford his people a rich inheritance beyond the grave.

6. While many of the saints,—possibly all—have willingly admitted, that other agencies, besides the church, as sects in religion, "moral societies," missionary schemes, originating in human wisdom, have possibly accomplished some good in the world, most of us, have long been satisfied, that if the same talent, zeal and labor had been performed in the use of the means in the church of God alone, the good results would have been incomparably greater. The obvious tendency of all real, or apparent good through new institution and experiments, without express sanction from above, it seems to us, to rob God of his honor, and to give the glory to the wisdom of the wise men of the earth. Hence, we can not anticipate any salutary and very great moral revolution in the world, till agencies found in the church, are employed, to the exclusion of all others. Other plans are for the use of the wise men of the world, who regard not God and his ways. "Let the dead bury their dead," but christians are called to work in the Lord's vineyard.

7. We presume not to intimate that, we have attained to the high degree of spiritual perfection to which we aspire, or that all things amongst the Disciples, have operated just as we could have desired, and yet we trust that, no obliquity on our part, nor striking dereliction from the simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, has been of fatal character. Even in the days of the Apostles, slight departures from the truth were painfully witnessed. While all the members at Corinth should have been "for Christ," some were for Paul, and some for Apollas, while others were for Peter. Yet the Apostles pronounced none of them apostates from the cause, but earnestly exhorted the erring, to return speedily to duty and perfect loyalty to royal authority. While the overwhelming masses of the saints have uncompromisingly maintained, the full ability of the church, for "sounding out the truth to the lost" some with good intentions, brought into the church, Babylonish views with a fearful amount of mystic language, and hence the origin, in the good state of Ohio, of a "missionary society" to raise and disburse funds, and regulate the preaching of the Gospel. Although, the scheme proved too narrow for general use

on long continuance the tendency given by the movement possibly led other good men, to work up the "*Louisville plan*" for the same work. This, possibly, led a dissatisfied brother at "Indianopolis" to make a book, in which to develope, what he and his friends called, "The Lord's plan" of organization and christian work. More recently, the speculative spirit of the brethren, has brought to light. a "*Baltimore officiary*" or scheme of organization, church government and church work, perfectly unique. With the conviction, that a better plan could be devised, to prepare brethren for the ministry of the word, than exists in the churches, the brethren in Kentucky, have in their, possiby, wise discretion, thought proper to create a "Bible college." All these expedients and experiments, must necessarily rest upon their own merit for weal or otherwise; and therefore, we refer to them merely as subjects of historical notoriety, and feel no disposition at present to make war upon them. Should they prove efficient for the purposes contemplated, we may most heartily bid them God speed. If, however, it should eventually appear that, they are not of God, and that their influence coresponds not with the principles of the christian institution, they will most assuredly come to naught, and all connected with them will "suffer loss"—the loss of their labor at least. Still we can but trust that, that which seems to many, as gross departures from the authority of Christ, and the simplicity of the Gospel, will not very materially interfere with the triumphs of the kingdom, against which even the gates of the under world were not to prevail.

In closing however, our reflection, upon the value of a pure speech, and "Wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ" in our religious communications, we deem it proper and alltogether respectful, to single out, what seems to be a very small mistake, in joining together words, which the spirit did not so place. Both words are of divine origin, but the collation is human, The disciples in Kentucky, have for years justly boasted of owning and directing, the most prominent institution of learning amongst us, or in the south west. Recently the question was raised, "Who owns the property of Kentucky University." The charter reads: "For the ownership and control of said University, at least two thirds of the board of curators, shall always be members of the christian church in Kentucky."

When we open the Bible, no "Christian church" is discovered on its sacred pages. In the enactments of the Kentucky Com-

mon wealth, the researches for a "The Christian church" have proved abortive. When, we look into the history of the past, no such an organization can be discovered. We hear from the contending parties, threats of appeal to the courts of justice and the Legislature, to determine the ownership of the property. The courts are utterly incompetent, and the Legislature is powerless, for settling the question of legal right. No court but a moral one. can solve the problem. All the trouble has been brought upon the brethren by listening to a false logic. such as was employed in the seduction of Eve.

While they professed to take the Bible and teach it, just as it was dictated by the spirit of God, Satan said to them. "This will do," "God doth know" if there is no such wording, as "The christian church of Kentucky" wise lawyers of the land can for a fee, construe the words to mean all that may be desirable, for christians to hold the property.

If the brethren had selected "curators" to act as Trustees for "The disciples of Christ" or "Christians" in Kentucky, or for the "Members of the churches of Christ" or of "The saints" in Kentucky, no posible controversy could have arisen as to title. What will be the end of this controversy, God only sees.

We do not recollect a more striking instance of great evil, arising from what at first, seemed to be but, a small error, a slight mistake in joining two words, in the charter, and what still, seems to some, a matter of no great magitude. No tribunal can settle the question justly, without acting upon the *unexpressed intentions*, of the donors: instead of, what is in the books—human or divine.

This should serve as a lasting warning to us, to employ none but wholesome words, rightly joined together, in our labors of love.

So deeply are we impressed with reference to the importance of "Wholesome words" in our examinations of truth, that we promise, it shall be our constant labor, to speak and write upon every subject, which we may judge appropriate, to the great purposes in view, as nearly as possible, in the pure words and forms of the Holy spirit, as found in the Divine volume.

The general adoption, indeed, of a "pure speach" and "sacred forms," would scarcely fail to, contribute to the speedy correction of many glaring and fatal errors in the religious world, and to bring all who honestly desire to know the truth, to see eye to eye and to speak the same things. A great work is most assuredly committed to such as profess to work by light from on high; and

it becomes us well, to confidently speak when we find authority, and when there is no clearly revealed light, to observe respectful silence. God has kindly delivered to his servants, his mind, not "in words of man's wisdom, but in words which the Holy spirit teaches" and our safety, as well as the safety of our readers, depends mainly, upon the use of the instrumentalities in our profession.

With these reflections, regarding the nature of the sound words of the spirit and especially, the "Inspired forms" of our Heavenly Father, for enlightening and guiding a fallen race, we feel encouraged to invite our readers to a brief examination of the

"DOCTRINE OF GOD" IN REFERENCE TO "THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS."

Paul says, "He that comes to God, must believe that he is, and that, he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," and "without faith, it is impossible to please him." It is said, indeed, that, "Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin." Scriptural conclusions in regard to faith, can not be too highly appreciated, and without them, professions of religion, are empty and vain. In mathematical reasoning, each question is tested first, *negatively*; and after showing the absurdity of all merely probable assumptions, the inevitable conclusion, leaves, not a remaining doubt. With regard to Faith—the great ruling element in religion—it will be perttinent to show first, what *it is not;* before showing what, it *really is.* The word is employed in such a wide range of meanings, in such multitudinous and contradictious applications, and so often without any cleary defined meaning, that unless, we can obtain relief through a definition which will defy the most regid criticism, universal doubt and confusion must prevail. We promise, at least, to observe order in our,

NEGATIVE TREATMENT OF FAITH.

In no application of the word, does faith amount to mathemat-

ical certainty. No one, for instance, *believes* that, "A straight line is the shortest distance between two points," that, "all the parts, are unequal to the whole;" or that, "The whole is greater than its parts." These are called "self evident statements" that require no proof, and in reference to which, there can be no process of reason, instituted, or proof taken. These are conclusions, springing directly from axiomatic elements, evolved from the constitution of the mind. Hence, no one undertakes to prove that, two and two make four, and yet no one of sound mind, can for a moment, doubt the truth of the conclusion. The universal language is, that we "*know*," these statements to be infallibly true.

If we are not much mistaken, the great masses of our contemporaries, discriminate not clearly between *knowledge*, *opinions* and *faith*, and correct definitions of these three words, will wonderfully contribute to the dissipation of the gross darkness of the times in reference to faith.

In preparing the way for a correct Historical statement of the faith revealed in the Holy scriptures, we find it necessary to advert to some of the prevailing *opinions* of the times, which we can but consider, quite subversive of the true doctrine. A few months since, an eminent preacher, of the most popular sect of the land, proclaimed to our citizens, that his "Faith depended for its existence, upon no intermediate conditions, such as words of truth, or argument, but simply and alone, upon direct revelation to his heart. The witness, he professed to *feel* in his soul, and therefore, he "*knew*," he was a child of God.

If we have been so fortunate as to comprehend the import of clearly stated propositions, myriads of our honest fellow citizens, profess nothing short of *demonstrable* evidence, their sins are pardoned. In our youth, we are frank to say, that we diligently sought this character of evidence, that our name was written in the Lamb's book of life; but we are not ashamed to own that, to this good hour, we can not demonstrate with Geometrical certainty that, there is a God, or that we, or our beloved associates, will be raised from the dust of death to immortality. "We walk by faith, not by sight," and we may safely add, that neither do intelligent christians, walk by *feeling*, or by sensuous impuless.

If one were to arise on the earth, with the ability to prove to the satisfaction of the people of God, that he had direct testimony of cceptance above, the fact, would at once, competely and for-

ever annihilate all the revealed condition of the faith in which the saints have rejoiced, for the past eighteen hundred years, and take from our souls, "The anchor of hope," which supports believers in Christ.

We certainly, can not be mistaken in the conclusion that, in all the popular revivals of the times, the converts profess demonstrable knowledge, or evidence direct from the throne of God, that their sins are pardoned, and their souls are saved. God either makes such special revelation, to the hearts of the people at this day, or he does not. If he makes no such revelations, the professed converts, of course, are dceceived, and they are still in their sins. This is, however, simply,a question of fact. Is it true, or false? If true, all who have not direct revelations, with reference to their spiritual condition, are in a lost state; the sacred scriptures afford no ground of faith, or hope, and Jesus of Nazareth, suffered in vain. We add that, from our childhood days, we have lived and acted with zealous religionists, who have hoped, for real or imaginary communications by the spirit, some, in words, but most, in *feeling;* and our very firm conviction is, that no one in such a state of mind, is prepared for the faith brought to light in the New covenent, or to obey any ordinance of God.

Possibly, it is incumbent upon us to notice a passage, or two in the Bible, generally produced to show the supposed axiomatic character of christian knowledge,

Job, by an improper rendering of the Hebrew, is made to say, "I know that, my Redeemer liveth, and that, he shall stand at the latter day, upon the earth. Job. 15: 25. The Hebrew word, *Yan-dang*, is translated variously. When used in reference to objects of sight, it is usually rendered, "I know" "I see," but in regard to questions, not of sight, it is, and should be "I understand" "I am confident, or sure" etc.,

There is no question that, Job employed the word in the passage, to express his full confidence bassed upon the imperfect light of his day, that, his Redeemer not only lived, but would stand at the latter day upon the earth.

Paul is made, to employ the Greek word *Oἰδα*, to say "We *know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God" (2 Cor. 5: 1) The word, is a variation of *Eideo*, which primarily means, to *see*, and is very often translated thus in the New Testament. In reference, to matters, of demonstrable character, it is proper to translate it, *I know*, but

such a rendering in many passages, would declare a falsehood. For instance, in John. 3: 8. the Savior is made to say, "You *know* not whence" the wind or spirit, one or the other, comes; but such an assertion is false, applied either in reference to the wind, or the spirit. It should be, you "*see not.*" When the word is employed not in regard to objects of sight, it is frequently rendered, "*discover, perceive, understand,* and was well used by Paul, in announcing his abiding confidence, that, there is a better house for the saints, beyond the tomb.

Hence, we conclude that, when men of extreme ignorance, seize upon such unsonnd renderings, to establish this false notions of truth, they not only pervert the plain elements of scriptural truth, but stultify and degrade themselves in the eyes of all the truly enlightened

To admit, indeed, the truth, of mathematical certainty on subjects spiritual, would completely overthrow, as we have already seen, all correct spiritual teaching. But want of space, admonishes us to close our remarks in reference to the shallow, and infidel delusion, that spiritual light, is *sensuous, fleshly* and *impulsive.* God governs beasts by *feeling* but he governs man, by addressing his understanding heart.

2. We must consider the strength of the notion, that every vague and unsatisfactory opinion in reference to religion, is to be exalted to the dignity of faith.

WHAT IS OPINION?

It is from the Latin, *opinio.* To think, guess, or conjecture, from probabilities, which amount not to knowledge, or certainty; and hence, can in no application, be employed, as the acquivolent of knowledge, or faith. An opinion, at least, is but a speculative, notion, impression, or imperfect conjecture, which flits through the mind, without the least positive authority. We may, for instance, imagine, conjecture, or opine that, the heavenly bodies are peopled as our earth, but, as opinions, are not in the line of correct intelligence, they should never be applied to questions of knowledge, or belief. Indeed, we are quite confident, we have shown that, when we speak of *knowing,* we have in our mind the

idea of absolute certainty, from demonstration. We *know* that, we are living, moving and thinking creatures of earth, but what is invisible, or not susceptible, of demonstrable examination, is not of course, a subject of knowledge, in its primary, usual and correct application. Hence, we conclude, that subjects of a spiritual character, are neither matters of positive knowledge, or vague opinions. We gravely ask then,

WHAT IS FAITH?

Like, possibly, all other spiritual questions, it is once, and only once, defined in the word of God. Paul wrote that,

"*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*" He. 11: 1.

The Greek word *ὑποστασις* which Paul uses to limit, the meaning of faith. is found five times in the New testament, and is translated three times, "*confidence*," once, "*person*" and once, "*substance*." The verb from which the noun is derived, signifies to, *underset*, to *stand under*, as a foundation. The word is rendered, in Latin, *subsantia*, denotes, that which *stands under*, and hence, our English word *substance*, from *sub*, *under*, and *stans*, *standing*. The intention of the Apostle was to say, "Faith is that which stands under things of hope, as a foundation," or Faith, is the *confidence*, or that in which we confide, for blessings of hope, for immortality and eternal life.

But Paul not only says, "Faith is the substance, or confidence of things hoped for, but also, the *Ελεγχος* (elenkos,) the *evidence*, or *conviction* of things invisible." The verb was used by Homer, to *shame*, to *disgrace*; and hence, in the New Testament it was likely employed to correct, to prove one in the wrong, and thus, to shame him. This, real, or supposed shame, of course, could but arise from the conviction of incapacity to discover things invisible, but through faith, we are quite filled with the hope of a better country, of a happy mansion in a city made without hands, eternal in the heavens. We can not presume to give force, to the definition, that "Faith is the the confidence of things of hope, and

the conviction, or assurance of blessings, which are unseen, and for which we most earnestly hope, to enjoy in heaven.

THE CONDITION OF FAITH.

There is but one condition of belief. Paul says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the words of God." When this simple proposition is received into an honest and understanding heart, all controversy, is at an end. The great trouble of the age is, to induce the people to receive the doctrine of Paul. It is so concise, so simple, so pointed and so free from mystery, that many think, it is too plain, for reality. The proposition requires not even an interpreter, and the feeblest responsible mortal of earth, can understand it, quite as easily and satisfactorily, as the profoundest philosopher. We recollect that, the famous French philosopher, said, "Belief in God, is a necessity of our nature;" and we, a few moments since, lifted our eyes from the 80th page of "The Christian Quarterly, for Jan. 1874, on which it is said by a very shrewed and able writer that, "The human mind, affirms God, by the necessity of its structure." The language bears a close resemblance to that of Robert Owen, in the famous debate with our most destinguished religious orator. Do these quotations accord, in form, or meaning, with Paul's declaration, that, "The world by wisdom knew not God." The history of man, shows most clearly that, Paul was not mistaken, that he really knew what he said, and spoke by authority. A single example of the existence of faith in God, or in reference to any thing spiritual, or invisible, from the necessity of nature, would be quite sufficient to overthrow not only the Bible, but also, every spiritual thought, impulse, or item of genuine faith in the world.

The more men speculate, as to the supposed *how*, faith reaches the human heart, without direct revelation, *vive voce*, the deeper they sink in ignorance and unbelief. We extremely regret the fearful tendency amongst preachers, and even scholars, to fancy that, faith springs, *apriori*, (from within,) and consequently, "comes not by hearing the word of God."

We consider it unbecoming in us, to make the attempt to

prove that Paul was correct, in his teaching, in reference to the manner, the faith, which saves the soul, enters the heart. We simply insist the Apostle's doctrine that, faith comes by *hearing*, is true; and that there is no other condition of faith or hope. The great trouble, is to influence men, to have faith in God.

"THE WORK OF FAITH."

Paul informs us that, "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes, to the Jew first, and also, to the Greek. Ro. 1: 16. This shows also that, faith is the active, living and moving principle, which leads every confiding soul into the full enjoyment of the salvation revealed by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is quite contrary, however, to the usual modes of thought in the present age. The notion prevails that, faith is universal with the human family; but conversion, is a rare occurrence. In the examples recorded by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles, the believers not only "cried out, what shall we do" but most cheerfully submitted to "That form of teaching" in obedience to which, "they were made free from sin, and became the servants of righteousness."

Faith, in all the examples recorded, was the sole power which wrought the indispensable change of heart, feelings, will and emotions, and reconciled the honest and thoughtful, to the will of the Father.

THE EVIDENCE TO THE WORLD, OF THE EXISTENCE OF FAITH.

Faith is no secret power dwelling in the soul, but that which may be *seen* and *read* of all men. Are we asked, how it is possible to *see* one's faith? When the man who was "sick of the palsy" was brought, it is written, "And Jesus *seeing* their faith, said, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." The Savior and all present, saw their faith. It was manifested by the

service of the afflicted one. The Apostle said, "Show me thy faith, without thy works, and I will show thee my faith, by my works." Again, "Faith without works, is dead; being alone." Of the "Father of the faithful" it was said, "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect." "And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God and it was imputed to him for righteousness."

In this connection, we deem it proper and respectful, to call attention to the prevailing practice of most orthodox parties, in requiring their presumed converts, to give, at least, verbal evidence of forgiveness of sins, and a complete translation into what they call, "The invisible kingdom" before performing a single visible or invisible act of obedience required in the scriptures. We are fully advised that, so soon as the Apostle's testimony was received, in the first age of the church, confession of confidence that, "Jesus was the Christ," the son of the living God, was made in order to the obedience through which, the trusting "put on Christ;" but in examples to which we refer, the frightened inquirers, are led to declare a *knowledge* of the salvation of the soul, before giving the slightest evidence of faith.

Possibly, Martin Luther and coadjutors, unwittingly contributed largely to the adoption of the most contradictory and unscriptural practice of modern times, in requiring honest people, to blunder through, what their leaders style a "Christian experience by faith alone" before entering the body of Christ. Luther and Calvin preached most earnestly against the traditionary performances of the Romish mistress, but had not the slightest thought of underating the obedienee of the gospel. Now, however, submission to Christ, as the legitimate result of faith, is classed with the forbidden works amongst the Jews, and the disgraceful mummery, of the hierarchy, of more modern times. This evinces shameful ignorance and wickedness in our preachers. If work was essential to make perfect, finish, or complete Abraham's faith, we can not discover any authority for what some call "Saving faith," before it is made alive and *perfected* by works, or through the "obedience of faith." Hence, it is a fatal error, to suppose that, the uninitiated, are believers, in any scriptural application, anterior to honoring the Lord in keeping his commandments. By the merely mental act of the mind, denominated faith, no one was ever justified, pardoned, or scripturally saved. Such a faith, is

pronounced by the spirit, "dead, being alone." Consequently, the distempered impulses, of frightened souls, construed into evidence of the indwelling of the spirit, before entering the fold of Christ, afford not the slightest assurance of the forgiveness of sins. Abraham was justified by faith, simply and alone, in perfecting his faith, by obeying the command of God to go into a strange country. The Harlot, Rahab, was justified by faith, in protecting the spies. The early converts to Christ, were justified, pardoned and saved, when they were led under the yoke of the Savior; and out of Christ, there was no remission. The devils believed, but were neither, justified nor pardoned. They were not in condition, to submit to the Gospel; and the many, "Jews who believed," but refused to "confess" the Savior, remained unjustified, unpardoned and unsaved. Many, like Felix of old, "Tremble" at the word, and are almost "persuaded to be christians," but in consequence of failing to yield themselves, soul, body and spirit, to the authority of Christ, live and die in sin. The promise of the salvation of the soul, is to no one who, refuses to "deny himself, take up the cross, and follow the Lord in his appointments.

The imaginary salvation, therefore, of men who look for pardon, by faith only, is subversive, of all the purposes of christian institution.

The Gospel of Christ, is represented, as "The savor of life, unto life" to the obedient; but of "Death, unto death" to the negligent and fearful souls, who refuse to honor the Lord. While it saves the obedient believer from sin and death, it hardens the heart and sears the conscience of him who hesitates to confess the blessed Redeemer. Such indeed as hear, but submit not, are delivered over to "hardness of heart and reprobacy of mind."

Paul teaches that, the "Partakers of Christ, held the *beginning* of their faith, steadfast to the end". (He. 3: 14.) and that, "The promise was to Abraham, through the righteousness (obedience) of faith." (Ro. 3: 13.)

With these scriptures before us, in reference to the *power* of faith, we invite our readers to examine,

THE UNITY OF FAITH.

Paul said, "There is one faith," and the Savior fervently prayed

that, "All believers, through the words of the Apostles, might be one, as he and the Father, were one." We should not presume, to argue, the truth of these propositions; and therefore we feel no disposition, to exhort our fellow travellers to eternity, even to believe them. God has left all his responsible creatures, perfectly free, to believe and live forever, or to disbelieve and suffer the terrible consequences. All in whose hearts faith exists, through the influence of the truth, "as it is written" are of "one mind, one soul," one profession and one aim.

There is a controling power in truth, from which men of honest purpose, can not well escape.

We ask the attention of our readers, to a very consise statement of the subject of *unity*, through *light*, and *honesty* of purpose, as reciently published, in the "*Christian Examiner*" of Richmond Va.

J. J. Lowell, submitted some years since, in writing, the following, question to, "Miss Antonette L. Brown, the learned woman preacher."

"Is the word, "*for*" in Greek, the same, in Mat. 26: 28. as in Acts. 2: 38. where it is written, "*For remission of sins*?" Miss Brown, promptly answered that, "The words in Greek, are not the same. One is, *gar*, the other is *eis*."

The question was then submitted to the Professors of Greek, in each of three Colleges, of high position, under different denominational influences. We have their answers.

1. HOBART COLLEGE. 1853.

Mr. J. J. Lowell,

Dear Sir:

The word translated *for* before, "remission of sins" in Mat. 26: 28, and Acts. 2: 38, is the same in both passages. It is *eis*, and signifies, *the end* or *purpose*, of an action, and the passage in both places, can not be more literally translated, than, "for the remission of sins."

Respectfully,

R. METCALF,

Prof. of Lang's.

2. HAMILTON COLLEGE. 1853.

Mr. J. J. Lowell,

The Greek word translated, "*for*" in the expres-

sion, *"for the remission of sins,"* is the same in Mat. 26: 28, and Acts. 2. 38. The preposition *eis* generally, expresses, *motion, towards any object*, and is rendered by *to, into etc.*,

It seems to indicate a *purpose, aim*, or *intention*, and might be rendered, "*In order to the remission of sins.*" The same preposition is used in Luke 22: 19. "Do this, *in order to*, my remembrance;" and *eis*, is also used in Mat. 7: 4. "For a testimony unto them."

Yours truly,

EDWARD NORTH,

Prof. of Greek.

3. UNION COLLEGE. 1853.

Dear Sir:

The word rendered, *for*, both in Mat. 26: 28, and Acts. 2: 38, is the Greek *eis*. In both places, it has, in my opinion, the meaning of *purpose, object, aim, etc.* In both cases, the *remission of sins*" is the *aim*, the thing had in view, and which gives significance to the act, whether actually received by it, or not."

Yours with respect,

J. J. Lowell, TAYLOR LEWIS,

Prof. of Greek.

REMARKS.

1. The "Rev. Miss Antonette L. Brown," either intentionally, or otherwise, failed to answer according to the Greek text.

2. The Professors in the Colleges, understanding the Greek, could, as honest scholars, but answer in the identical words, thoughts and forms of speech.

3. All, who are led to believe through the words and forms of the New Testament, see alike, believe the same things, in precisely the same manner, and are therefore, one in heart and soul.

4. When the world shall be turned to seek spiritual light, through God's revelations, all will be one in faith and church, and one in heart and life.

5. Men devoid of the knowledge of God, as revealed in his word, are "*without God and without hope*. While all men have not faith, all are disposed to hope.

CONCLUSION.

In our hasty sketch of faith, our purpose has been to notice such points only, as seem to us, best calculated, to give a practical direction to the questions involved; and feeling encouraged to believe, we have not been entirely unsuccesful, we close for the present, with the following very brief summary.

1. We have endeavored to array such scriptures, as we think, ought to satisfy sincere inquirers after truth, that Faith is not only the great leading element of doctrine, in the Christian scriptures; but is also, the soul moving power, which gives life and value to every ordinance of the gospel, and to all christian service whatever.

2. We have certainly shown that, faith is not produced in the heart, by miraculous power, but comes by "hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

3. It is not, *demonstrable*, in its nature; therefore, no one should employ the word faith, or belief, as the acquivalent of mathematical certainty. We should not be so vain as to assert that, we *know* things, which are spiritual and invisible, as we do things, material and earthly.

4. Opinions are not faith, and enter not into its constituency. They are but vague impressions, often, idle speculations, and can not form a safe rule for religious belief or action. The speculations of the age whether written in "creeds," or in philosophical systems, afford no sufficient ground of faith. No one believes, Calvinism, Armenianism, Romanism or Universalism. All who receive not cordially, the truth, as given by the spirit, are without faith, and without the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Hence, we conclude that, the line, between the believing and unbelieving world, is sufficiently clear and plain, for all practical purposes.

"MINISTERS OF CHRIST," (I. COR. 4. 1.)

In our brief and very incomplete examination of the subject of '*Church organization*," near the close of vol. 2nd, of the HISTORIAN, we ventured to call in question, the authority of religious teachers generally, for calling "God's ministers" "*officers*," in the churches; and as we had a right to expect, various objections to our conclusions, have already been filed. Amongst these, we find on our table, a cautiously written and quite respectful production, from the facile pen, of our life-long friend and beloved brother, Dr. C. Kendrick, "Editor of the Texas Department of the American *Christian Review*," which the author, of course, expects us to publish in the present form. While we are anxious, to encourage our friends to rigidly criticise, every thing written by us, which may seem of doubtful import, we suggest in much kindness, that the range of our brother's remarks is so wide, and his conclusions so sweeping, if not dogmatical, that we give it as our opoinion, a better plan can be adopted, for bringing out the full light of the scriptures upon the questions involved. Is it not possible, for christians, to discuss in a brotherly manner, important differences? In all successful efforts of courteous interchange of views, the cause of truth is promoted, and God is greatly honored.

If we are mistaken, as to the teaching of the Holy word, in reference to ministers, ministerial work, or other matters, we are persuaded, that, we can cheerfully submit to correction.

In this confidence, we propose to the Editors of the *Review*, or of any other journal, devoted to the cause of truth, a brotherly examination, both of points of agreement, and disagreement, in reference to the divisions of labor ordained in the church, including the character and *style* of God's chosen agents in the various departments, with the view of publishing, both sides in our respective journals.

Will this be satisfactory to our brethren, who write for the public, and especially, brother Kendrick? It should scarcely be concluded brethren, that we have discovered all revealed and necessary truth, for conducting church affairs. Presuming then, that we may all have still something to learn, which may assist us in our

labors of love, we most respectfully submit for examination, the following very grave and important subjects, viz:

1. *Affirmative.* There is scripture in the New testament, for the *word* and *idea* of *office*, in the sense of authority, vested by church, or ministerial action, for administering the ordinances of religion.

Negative. There is no scriptural authority, for the word, or idea of *office*, except in the sense of *work*, which may be performed without any, *investiture* beyond what is conferred by birth-right, in becoming members of the body of Christ.

2. *Affirmative.* There is scripture for the word and idea of *ordination*, in the sense of *investiture*, with authority to rule and perform other service in the church, which, it is not lawful for other members, not thus *invested*, to perform.

Negative. There is no such authority as the above, in the sacred oracles.

3. *Affirmative.* There is scriptural authority, for *making deacons* in, and for the church, by election, and *initiation* into office, by fasting, prayer and the imposition of hands.

Negative. There is no scriptural authority for *making deacons*, by the church, or by officers of the church. Men and women are called deacons, in consequence of service performed, just as John was called "The baptist," because he baptized, and Simon was called "The tanner" because he made leather.

4. *Affirmative.* There is authority in the scriptures for making elders, by election, appointment, or consecration to office, of men, who were not previously elders.

Negative. There is no authority, which leads us to conclude, that, elders were ever *made*, by any church, or official action whatever. Brethren in the church anciently, who in consequence of their age, experience and wisdom, were entitled to the designation of elders, were by the Holy spirit designated, or *made*, designed, and consecrated of God, as the overlookers, or bishops in the congregations, while no menber was ever made, appointed or constituted an elder by a church or official ceremony.

5. *Affirmative.* Bishops, are the regularly elected and consecrated rulers in the church, of equal authority with the elders, and, but from their *investiture* in office, they could have no authority, to rule, govern, and control in church affairs.

Negative. Except, by the authority or influence of the Grecian and Romish hierarchies, the history of the world reveals

not bishops made in this manner. The scripiural bishops, are merely, the overlookers of the respective flocks, who acquire their distinctive name, solely, from the character of their labor. A man is an overseer who oversees, and sinecures, are not recognized in our oracles.

6. *Affirmative.* Preachers are scripturally made, by education in the college, or other wise, and consecration to office.

Negative. Scriptural preachers, are made, by converting sinners to God, or by the new birth, as in the case of saul of Tarsus. From the hour persons enter Christs body, it is their duty to continue, in the "Apostle's teaching, in prayer, fellowship and the breaking of bread," When brethren are sent out by the churches, they are the Apostles, messengers and envangelists of the churches are amenable to the congregations, and are supported by them.

7. *Affirmative.* The deacons, Elders, Bishops, and Evangelists, when, regularly elcctcd to office. and fully invested, empowered, and clothed with authority, by regular ordination, constitute the, "*officiate*" or the governing and teaching class in the churches.

Negative. In the congregations of the saints anciently, all the members were commanded to be, "*subject one to another*;" and no one, was to be respected, as teacher or ruler beyond the measure of his intelligence, and his moral influence, as exhibited in successfully instructing others, and his good works as shepherd or pastor of the flock. All theories, involving the idea, of authority to rule or govern, by official investiture, belong legitimately, to Rome and her daughters, and are not of New testament origin, or character.

If our brethren of the *Review*, or others, are disposed to examine these matters, in the light of the scriptures, in the fair, frank and kindly spirit of the Savior, they will please signify it, by publishing what we have here submited, as our No. 1: All answers and reviews, of not more than, from four to six cap pages, will be cheerfully given to the readers of the HISTORIAN, with the understanding, that replies of equal length, will be admitted on the pages of the *Review*. If this offer, should not be satisfaetory, brethren, we will give respectful attention to any other plan of procedure, which may be thought better.

In Hope,

T. FANNING.

TO OUR CORRESPONDENTS

While it is the usual custom of editors and publishers, to furnish their readers, as often as possible practical, copious commendatory and flattering extracts, as evidence of high merit, and great success, we consider a different course far preferable; especially, in conducting, a journal devoted to the subject of religion.

We were fully aware, from our first issue, that many grave questions might come under examination, which, some of our religous associates, and learned contemporaries, have not studied with care, and we have therefore thought it best not to appeal to theprejudice of society for aid, or attempt to establish the truth of our conclusions, by popular clamor.

Our sole desire is to ascertain what is truth, in reference to all vital questions, and if possible, to teach the truth to others, who may be in condition to appreciate it. While we rejoice that, at least, partial success has attended our labors, in exciting interest in some of the excellent of the earth, in others, we regret to know, fearful apprehensions exist as to the tendencies of our most earnest pleadings. From the beginning of our historical researches, allusions and hasty sketches, all of which we have regarded, but as introductory, we have earnestly, and we think, most cautiously, sought the aid and co-operation, of our most judicious and discriminating friends in the church and out of it, and still to the present writing, we regret to say, that we think many, of our very excellent writers, have manifested over cautiousness. If we have erred, in the slightest degree, we would rejoice in brotherly correction. True, we have received some able communications for our pages; but generally, they have been of so wide a range of thought, and so deficient in systematic statement, exactness in subject and point in argument, that we have hesitated to give them publicity.

Had we felt at liberty, to make, extracts from various productions which we have received, we might have given much greater interest to our publication; but some of our friends, write from stand points, which are so far distant from ours, that we can hardly hope, to select, such material, as we may think best adapted to the times. We still trust that we shall soon reach fields of

greater light, where all may see, how and what to approve, or disapprove, as their inclinations may dispose them. It affords us sincere satisfaction, however, to thank our brethren and friends, who have written to us so approvingly, touching the matters, we have attempted to treat; and, to the very few who have expressed opposition, we beg leave to say, brethren, we are heartily sorry, that we have not been able to please you. We still think, that we have made no important mistake, in our researches, and that, when our friends shall come to understand our teaching, and especially, the teachings of the Holy Spirit a little better, there will exist no radical cause of difference between us. Still hoping that earnest men, who labor for the promotion of truth, are disposed to administer correction, and to cheerfully give assistance where most needed, we confidently submit for their consideration, a few important subjects in reference to which, we wish to give our readers, as a fitting basis of a church history, that can not fail to command respect, the most able, thorough and exhaustive treatises, which can be secured from the friends of truth.

1. *Scriptural faith, in all its aspects and bearings.*

2. *Repentance, in saints and sinners, with all its practical applications.*

3. The good confession, in order, to enter the body of Christ, and, for subsequent lives of Christian purity.

4. *Remission of sins aliens and offending to members of the church.*

5. *The New birth. Is it a birth, by water and the spirit? or are there two births?—one of water, and the other, by the spirit? Is there a birth of the inner man? and another of the outward man?*

6. *The Regeneration, its scriptural import—no opinions, will be recieved as authority.*

7. *The evidence of acceptance as a christian, and "The witness of Holy spirit, that we are heirs of God, and joint heirs of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

8. *The ability of the church of God, for religious work.*

9. *The competency of human organizations for religious labor.*

10. *What is lacking in the churches, to give them greater efficiency, in the salvation of the world?*

These, we select as some of the most fruitful themes for examination, and upon any one of which, or upon others, we would be most thankful, to receive well matured treatises for our columns.

In the mean time, we beg leave to say, that we hold ourself

responsible to our brethren and to the world, for our conclusions.

Should any objection, be presented, which we can not remove by the light of Inspiration, it will be of the greatest service to us, and to our readers, to submit to the exposure. We trust that, we possess the christian manhood, to, prove all things, and still hold fast that only, which is true, lovely and of good report." Beloved brethren, let us kindly employ our spiritual and worldly wisdom, as friends in the glorious cause committed to our charge, by our heavenly citizenship. Strike hard, but lovingly, if we are in the wrong, but if we are in the right, say, *amen*, and God will bless you, when we can not.

A MORTIFYING EXPLANATION.

For the sake of information, we found it necessary to send "Postal cards" to a number of our subscribers, inquiring, "If payment had been made," for 1 and 2 vols. and to whom? Some who had paid various amounts in the Nashville office, not yet reported to us, supposing, we intended to collect again, became offended and turned away from us. Brethren, we were not to blame, the loss is ours, and if the work is what you want, send for it. Our purpose is justice to all, and injustice to no one.

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, and friends of the world. While we feel greatly encouraged, from the very liberal paronage. which has been kindly tendered, in the circulation of "THE RELIGIOUS HISTORIAN," our heavy expenses, in the publication, still require a little more, activity, to place us on self-sustaining ground, A very slight effort on the part of friends to the work, we doubt not, would, not only be of signal advantage to us, but also, essentially contribute to the diffusion of spiritual light, in the churches and amongst anxions readers of the world. Shall we brethren, have a favorable response?

"THE SUPPER IN THE FORENOON."

Brother W. T. Bush, of Texas, asks. Upon what authority do christians attend to the supper in the forenoon."

The Lord's supper was instituted, in the evening, after the paschal feast. The word *supper*, however, in Greek, is as appliable to breakfast or dinner, and is generally, applied to feasts, or repasts, of any character, or at any hour of the day.

The Savior, suffered from the 6th to the 9th hour, and, it would seem appropriate to attend the commemoration from noon to 3 P. M.

The disciples met on the first day, but for convenience at the feast, they were exhorted to wait for each other.

A HINT.

We scarcely know how to pen a *hint*, and therefore, we desire to say plainly, that we fear, some who receive the HISTORIAN, fail to read with sufficient care, to clearly comprehend the practical bearings of the great questions we have under examination. Time was, we are quite sure, when our people, generally, studied with deep solicitude, every thing written, calculated to advance the cause of truth. Onward, and upward, should still be our motto.

TRANSLATION OF JOHN, 20: 22.

Και τουτο ειπων, ενεφυσησε, και λεγει αυτοις· Λαβετε πνευμα ἁγιον.

Trans. "And this having said, he breathed on, and says to them, receive you a Holy spirit."

Bro. P. H. Adams of Florence Texas, asks, if this is a fair translation of the Greek?

answer. We can not see, how a literal translation of the words could be put in better form. Our version makers were determined to translate the passage with the idea, that the Savior, breathed *on* the disciples—that is, breathed the spirit upon them, before given from heaven. Such a rendering, contradicts the whole history of the spirits mission, and does violence to the Greek.

PROSPECTIVE.

We are pleased to give our readers assurance, that in future issues of the HISTORIAN, we may anticipate a thorough discussion of church organization, with all "*official*" labor in, or for the church, from two of our able scribes. Bro. Kendrick, on the west, and Bro. Pres. W. K. Pendleton, on the east, as watchful sentinals, stand pledged for the defence of official gevernment in the churches. Brethren, we are willing to contribute our mite, to the discussion and trust our readers are anxious to examine impartially both sides of all the great questions involved.

SYSTEM IN LIFE.

Young persons can form but an imperfect idea, of the importance of having some system in their every day life. Regular habits are a protection from much that is calculated to injure. They enable persons to make the most of existence and spend it to the best advantage. One who rises in the morning, without an idea how he will pass the day, is far more apt to waste, than to improve it. If he profess to be religious and does not in the early hours, call upon God, he is almost certain to go wrong in other ways. He looks back at night and feels that if he had had some system in the performance of duty and had constantly adhered to it, he would have less cause for regret and would have spent the day more happily, more usefully. The neglect of morning duty brings a feeling of dissatisfaction that often leads to farther wrong; and one does not know how far he may stray from the right path, before the mantle of night falls around him. If there is a system in the mind which is carried out every day, there is time for all the duties that fall to the lot of man. They are attended to at the proper time and there is not that confusion and neglect, that occur in lives without this guiding star.

Regularity is a chain of gold made up of perfect links and none of them are missing to destroy its usefulness. Morning hours well employed bring pleasant evenings. " I have done the duty of every hour as it came," is a reflection that fills the mind with constant peace. Old persons who have lived without any

plan for the cultivation of religious character, have cause for sorrow. There has been much waste of time, where there migh have been regular improvement of mind and heart. They have neglected many duties, because they had no set-time for performing them. They have prayed and read the Scriptures when they had not much else to do, instead of devoting certain hours to duties so important.

What time has the Father in heaven set for thinking of, and taking care of his children? Is there an hour, day or night, in which they are forgotten by him? Is there a minute in which he does not give them "life and breath and all things" they need? If he manifests his love and care every moment should we not have set times to acknowledge his goodness and thank him for it?

When there is a time set a part to think of God, nothing else satisfies the mind. The habit, every day, grows stronger and brings increase of happiness. He who wishes to look back over his life with satisfaction, must spend it in a manner best calculated to make him a good man, and he cannot do this, without some system running like a thread of silver through all his days and nights. If confusion rules them, he is not apt to become much wiser or better. He who would form a regular, consistent character, should have his hours for devotion, for business, hours for improvement, for social intercourse, for recreation. Many things occur to prevent a regular course of life, but determination conquers difficulties. When the habit has been acquired of spending the present time usefully, and there is something of importance to fill up the coming hour, much has been done towards the formation of character that will gain respect by a course of usefulness in the world, and also, towards making life cheerful and pleasant. Youth is the time to consider, how can I act, so as to promote my own happiness and usefulness, and aid others to attain the same object? This cannot be done without some system in life, without constant and regular effort. The Young cannot pass thoughtlessly on without forming thoughtless unreliable characters. Those who do so, weep at the end, over wasted lives. They have not gained the respect of their fellow beings or the friendship of the Father in heaven, and they go to the grave in gloom, without the sweet hope that cheers the man, who has regulated his life in the fear of God.

"WHAT SHALL I DO?"

Said a dear young friend a few days ago, with tears rolling down her cheeks and her sorrow almost too great to bear. The darkness was so thick, the cloud so heavy, she could not think how they would ever pass away.

No doubt, we have all thought as she did. We have felt that we were walking blind fold, and have so earnestly desired a kind hand, to lead us through the gloom. We could not help ourselves and when we have felt most helpless, we have gone to our Father, cast ourselves humbly at his feet and told him all our trouble. We have claimed his promise that, "he would never leave or forsake us." We have determined " though he slay me yet will I trust him." The way has still seemed dark, but bright rayshave trembled through the gloom and hope has arisen in hearts that were before, full of sadness. All we can do when sorrows press upon us is to look beyond the present to a brighter world.

If we dwell upon our difficulties, they increase, and seem harder to bear, but when we cast our burden on the Lord, he promises to sustain, and although weeping may endure for a night, joy comes in the morning. There are precious promises to those who mourn, in submission to the will of God. Sorrow purifies the heart and leads it to look to a world where sorrow does not come. It develops strength and goodness of character and calls forth energies that were lying dormant. I would say to my young sister. Be patient. Resign all to our Father. He knows best, he does not willingly afflict his children. His own son bore a load of grief, heavier than ours, and the Apostle says, "He was made perfect through suffering." We must endure the cross if we would wear the crown. If we can, be resigned and take fresh courage. The clouds we dread so much may be full of mercy, and may break, in blessings on our heads.

JAMES A. BUTLER,

Our aged, highly gifted and devoted brother, closed his earthiy pilgrimage at his home, near Helena, Ark., Dec. 26, 1873. In all the south, for the past forty years, we have not known a more self-sacrifising, zealous and courteous Christian gentleman, than was our much lamented Brother Butler. But for some few slight eccentricities and dark shades in his pathway, mainly, from an over anxiety in the affairs of Cesar, we have scarcely known a brother of more lovely qualities.

Peace to his ashes! We trust our beloved life co-laborer, rests in the embraces of our exalted Redeemer.